God, the Children's Teacher

(No. 3271)

A SERMON TO CHILDREN.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,

AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON, ON TUESDAY EVENING, MARCH 2,1869.

"O God, You have taught me from my youth." Psalm 71:17.

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, OCTOBER 15, 1911— THE DAY OF SPECIAL PRAYER FOR SUNDAY SCHOOLS AND OTHER WORK AMONG CHILDREN.

[SPECIAL NOTE TO SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS, PARENTS, ETC. Mr. Spurgeon seldom preached especially to children—his Sermons are all so simple that boys and girls as well as the common people heard him gladly and understood his words easily. The accompanying discourse is one of the very few delivered to a congregation of young people by the beloved preacher who has been for nearly 20 years at Home with the Lord. It was preached at the Tabernacle during a series of special services in March, 1869—and it is now published in the regular weekly series at the time of special prayer for the children and young people in Sunday schools, Bible classes, Christian Endeavor Societies, etc., in the hope that all who are interested in the spiritual welfare of the young will aid in its widespread circulation among them.]

DAVID was a very great man and at the time he used these words he ruled a kingdom and wore a crown. But he needed to be taught and he tells us that he had been to school and that the wisdom he had was given to him by the great Teacher who taught in that school. You who are at school now must take care that you use well the privilege you have. You will not be wise without learning. Learning does not grow up in our heart like weeds do in the fields, but it must be sown in us—as good wheat and barley must be cast into the ground if there is ever to be a harvest.

David did well in life because he had been well taught in his youth. He was one of those in whom God fulfilled that text, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it." You know when boys go to school, their teacher feels very anxious that they should turn out well and be a credit to him. The teacher is very sorry when, after all his trouble, the boy becomes a dunce. But he is very happy when he sees some lad prosper in life because he says, "I trained that boy." The success of the scholar brings honor and credit to the teacher. So David speaks of God having taught him in order that he may give honor and Glory to God. David feels that he owes so much to his God that he cannot help saying what he does. "Lord," he seems to say, "if I have learned anything—if I have learned how to fight giant Goliath, if I have learned how to bear my troubles, if I have learned how to pray, if I have learned how to preach and how to be a king—I got it all from You. I

was the scholar, you were the Teacher, and unto Your name be all the praise." Now, I shall not keep on any longer with the preface to my sermon. It is a cold, damp night and people do not like to be kept outside the doors at such a time. We will just put our finger on the latch and get to the inside of our sermon at once.

I. As soon as we come into it, the first thing we see is THE GREAT TEACHER. Who is the Teacher? David says, "You have taught me from my youth." Who taught David? THE CHILDREN: God!

Mr. SPURGEON: Yes, that is right, God was David's Teacher. He says in the text, "O God, You have taught me from my youth." I have no doubt that David had other teachers, but all the teachers he had would not have been of any practical use to him if he had not also been taught by God.

Now, if God is the Teacher, we shall notice, first, that God is an effective Teacher. David had been taught by his good mother. I know he had a godly mother, for he says, "Lord, truly I am Your servant. I am Your servant and the son

of Your handmaid." He calls his mother, God's handmaid, which shows that she was one of God's servants. I have no doubt that she took David on her knee and taught him God's Word while he was but a child, for he had such a love of it afterwards that he must have had a love of it while he was yet little! After his mother, I have no doubt his father taught him. What was the name of David's father? THE CHILDREN: Jesse!

Mr. SPURGEON: Quite right. And we believe that Jesse was also one of God's people and that he would have been sure to teach his son wisely and train him up in the way he should go. I think there was another person who taught David, namely, the Prophet Samuel. You recollect that Samuel anointed David while he was yet a youth. He poured oil on his head and told him that he would one day be a king of God's people. I feel sure that Samuel told him what God's will was and tried to train him so that he might, when he became a king, do God' s good pleasure rightly. But all these teachers—his mother, his father and the Prophet—could not have taught David if God had not taught him, too. You see, dear Children, your teachers, though they are very good and kind, can only get at your ears—but God gets at the heart—and that is where we most need to be taught. Suppose my watch should get out of order so that it would not run and I could not get it open? All I could do in polishing up the gold outside, or cleaning the glass, would not make it run! I must take it to some watchmaker who could get at the inside and who could touch the mainspring, or clean out the wheels. Now, your teachers cannot get at that which is inside of you as they could wish, unless God helps them. But God can get at the heart, which is like the mainspring of the watch. He can get at our thoughts and feelings, which are like the wheels. I trust that you, my dear Children, may be taught of God from your youth because God is an effectual Teacher!

The next point is that God is a condescending Teacher. Have you ever thought of this? The great God made yon blue sky, the sun and the moon, and all those bright stars that we see at night. He piled up the big mountains and poured out the great seas and oceans from the hollow of His hands and He is so great that all the things in this world are just like nothing when compared to Him—and yet He stoops to teach children! He stooped to teach David. David says, "You have taught me from my youth." Would not some of you girls like to go to school if the Queen would but teach a class? I am sure that nearly all the young ladies and all the little girls in London would be tearing away to the place if the Queen would but teach a class! You would think it such a great honor to be taught by Her Majesty. Oh, but when God teaches, what a wonderful stoop of condescending love that is! He who made the world and bears all things up by His everlasting might, condescends to be a teacher of little children! "You have taught me from my youth." Perhaps you have heard of that holy man, Mr. John Eliot. He went away from all his home comforts, out among the Red Indians, and spent his life in preaching to them. And when he was sick and near to death, he was lying in a hut upon a hard couch—and what do you think was the last thing he did? He had a New Testament and he was teaching a little Red Indian boy his A B C, and making him spell out some simple text from God's Holy Word. "Oh, but," one said, "does this great missionary teach that little red-faced, copper-colored boy?" "Yes," replied Eliot, "I prayed to God that I might never live to be useless. So now I cannot preach, I am trying to teach Jesus Christ to this one little boy." That was very kind of him, but think of the kindness of the great God who wheels the stars along and calls them all by their names—that He should condescend to teach us! Dear Children, do not refuse to be taught by God! But on the contrary, let this be your resolve, "My Father, You shall be the Guide of my youth." Ask the Lord to teach you, for as surely as He taught David, He is willing to teach you!

My next remark is that God is a loving Teacher I know you boys and girls in the Sunday school classes like to have a smiling-faced teacher. You do not care to have one who is very cross and short-tempered with you and inclined to give you a box on the ear! You like somebody who is very kind. I cannot tell you how kind God is to us, how patient, how compassionate, how tender. A good mother was telling her little girl a lesson over ever so many times—I think it was 19 or 20 times—and someone said, "How can you have the patience to tell the child the same thing 20 times?" "Why," she replied, "I tell her 20 times because 19 are not sufficient." Now, our God not only tells us 20 times, but twenty thousand times if necessary! "For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little." From our very earliest childhood, right on, God keeps teaching us with great patience, and yet some of us are so wicked or so thoughtless that we forget what He teaches us almost as soon as we hear it! And we go on to do the wrong thing which He tells us not to do, and we forget to do the right thing which He bids

us do. Yet He does not strike us dead! He still continues preaching to us, teaching us on the Sabbath and on the weekdays by His Book, and by

His Spirit, and by His ministers, and by our teachers, and in a thousand ways! Oh, what a kind and patient Teacher the Lord our God is! But I must not keep you long on any one point.

The next Truth is that God is a wise Teacher. Have you ever thought what a wise Teacher God is? I will prove to you that He is very wise, for, do you know He teaches not only men, but He can teach beasts? Did you ever see a beaver? Perhaps you did at the Zoological Gardens. Well, those beavers have flat tails and they know how to use them just like bricklayers use their trowels! And they will go and nibble away at trees, get bits of wood and go down to a river and build a house! Nobody could build such a house, so fit for beavers, as they build! They daub it, and plaster it—you would think that they had been apprenticed to a plasterer, they do the work so well! Who taught the beavers to build a house? Why, God! And how wise He must be to teach even the animals He has created! How wise He must be to teach the beaver to build a house! But God not only teaches beasts, He also teaches fish—and I never heard of any man who could teach a fish as God does! The fishes of the sea know exactly the day of the month when they ought to begin to go round the English coast. And the herring and the mackerel come exactly to the time, though nobody rings the bell to say to them, "It is such a day of the week, and such a month of the year and you ought to swim away." When the time comes for them to go back again, away they go—and they seem to understand everything that they should do! If God can teach even the fish of the sea, what a wise Teacher He must be!

It is said that many years ago, there was a very wise man who lived at Cambridge and he taught scholars Latin and Greek, and many things that seemed very strange to the people who lived there. And the news flew abroad that there was a wonderful man there who knew everything—a little about the stars and a great deal about all sorts of things! The young men all over Europe began to flock to him and that is how there came to be a University at Cambridge, for the fame of the man's learning drew those who wanted to be taught, to come and be his pupils. Now, when God can teach even the beasts and the fishes, you boys and girls and grownup people, too, ought to say, "Lord, let us be scholars in Your school!" Why, my dear friend over here, Mr. Johnson, is such a good teacher that the boys come and fill the school-house! If he were a bad teacher, he would not have half the number of boys that he has. A good teacher is sure to draw pupils—and God is the best and wisest Teacher. Oh, may His Grace draw you to His school, that you may be able to say with David, "You have taught me from my youth"!

I have only one more point to speak upon under this head, so do not grow weary. God is a necessary Teacher. It is really necessary that everyone of us should be taught of God, for if we are not, somebody else will teach us—and that somebody else will so teach us that

we shall lose our souls forever! There was a sad sight seen some years ago, I daresay the likes of it have been seen far too often. A minister called at a house and he saw a woman crying, oh, so bitterly, and she refused to be comforted! The minister said, "My good woman, what is the matter?" She answered, "Oh, my boy, my boy, my boy!" "What, is he ill?" "Oh, no, Sir, worse than that!" "Is he dead?" "Worse than that." "What is the matter?" "Oh, my boy, my boy!" "Where is he?" "Oh, Sir, he is in prison—in prison for stealing—and it is all my fault!" "How is that?" he asked. "Why, I took him to the theater, and if there is any place where children can learn to do wrong, it is there!" And so she began to cry again. "I took him there and that was the first step in his ruin! And now my boy is lost." Ah, if you do not go to God to teach you, the devil will teach you! Do you know the devil has plenty of teachers? I see them on Sunday—I mean bad boys and bad girls who teach other boys and girls to do wrong—the devil can make a Sunday school teacher out of a very small boy! "Come," he says, "I'll teach you." And he teaches that boy to say bad words and to do wrong things—and then away the boy goes and teaches others! A bad boy is like a sheep that comes into the flock with a disease in it and the disease goes from one sheep to another—

"One sickly sheep infects the flock, And poisons all the rest."

But if we have God for our Teacher, we shall not be taught to sin, but we shall be taught everything that is good. II. But now we are going on to the second head and that is, THE LESSONS WHICH THE GREAT TEACHER TAUGHT DAVID.

One of the lessons which God taught David was to value his soul We all need to be taught that lesson. We generally value our bodies and take care of them and, up to a certain point, that is right. Some of us like to look into the mirror, for we think we are rather pretty. But there is danger in that mirror as well as in others. I like to see the boys well-washed and clean, and I am pleased when they keep themselves tidy. And though I do not like to see girls dressed very finely, yet it is very nice to see them neat and trim. But, after all, you know the body is only like the shell of the nut—the inside is

the nut itself. It is the soul hat is the thing we ought to care about. Some time ago there was a great fire. What a noise there was in the street! Here come the engines! People are gathering together all round the house and there is a woman shouting and crying, "Oh," she says, "come and help me! Do come and help me! I want to save some of my things. She gets a bed downstairs, she brings out a box, she has secured some little trinkets and jewelry and she gets everything that she can out of the fire, and then says to herself, "Dear me, am I not fortunate in having saved so much?" The fire is burning, the house is crackling, everything is being consumed and all of a sudden the woman starts up and says, "Oh, dear! Where' s my child?" The neighbors cry, "What? Did you not think of your child first?" "Oh," she replied, "what a foolish woman I've been! I have saved these paltry things and forgotten my child, my precious child!" That is like a person who cares only for his body—what he shall eat, what he shall drink, what he shall put on, and then at last, when he comes to die, he

says, "Oh, dear! I have forgotten my soul and now my soul must be cast away forever into the everlasting burning that never shall be quenched." Dear Children, I hope God will teach everyone of you in the Sunday school to look after the welfare of your soul and to remember that if you were to gain the whole world, and lose your own soul, all the gain would be an eternal loss!

The next lesson that God taught David was to value the world aright. David, I am sure, valued the world aright because he says, "There are many that say, Who will show us any good? Lord, lift You up the light of Your Countenance upon us!" And he says again, "Whom have I in Heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside You." Young people generally think of this world. I will tell you a story and ask you a question. There was a little boy carrying a basket of peaches and he had to cross a railway. Just as he crossed it, the train came up and went right over him and crushed him to atoms. A little girl heard that story, and I do not think you could guess what question she asked, because it was such a silly question that you never would guess it, I think. Her mother said the dear little boy was all crushed to pieces by the train going over him, but the little girl was silly enough to say, "Mother, what became of the peaches?" Was not that a foolish question to ask? Now, when I hear of people dying, and I often do hear of persons who have been living without God and without Christ, and they have been said to be "worth" perhaps £20,000, or £50,000, what silly question do you think I hear people ask? They say, "How much money did he leave?" As if that was of any consequence at all compared with the other question, "What has become of his soul? Where is his immortal spirit?" The little basket of peaches that the child carried was nothing compared with the boy, himself, and all that you can ever gain in this world is nothing compared with your own self, your own real self—your soul! So I hope you will be taught by God's Grace to put the world in its right place and look at it as being nothing compared with the saving of your soul!

Another thing that David was taught of God was to see his sin. I know that, in your classes, you have read the 51st Psalm. How much David talks about his sin in that Psalm! He says, "My sin is always before me." This is one of the lessons that every boy and every girl here must learn if they would enter Heaven. You must learn that you are a sinner and learn it so that it makes you mourn and cry out before God. I saw, last week, in the West End of London, two soldiers, with bayonets fixed, one walking on one side of a soldier, and the other on the other side of him. And the man who was walking in the middle had a coat over his hands. I knew what that meant—he had handcuffs on his wrists. He had been deserting and he had his hands chained together, but he did not want the people to know it and, therefore, he had asked his comrades to be kind enough just to throw a cloak over his hands so that he might not look as though he was chained. I do not blame him for that. But, you know, the devil—though men are all chained by nature and are, all of them, slaves—puts something over them so that they cannot see their chains and they walk on

believing that they are free, whereas they are in the worst possible bondage! One of the best lessons you can learn is to find out that you are a slave and that you need someone to set you free! To find out that your soul is sick and needs to be healed! Oh, may God's Spirit teach you that—and teach it to you in your youth!

But, better still, the next lesson that God taught David was, where the remedy was for all his sins. If you read the 51st Psalm, you can hear him say, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." David knew that the blood of Jesus Christ could take away his sin. I have heard, but I do not know whether it is true, that a little creature called the ichneumon, which lives in Egypt, lives by killing and eating snakes. It is a very useful little creature, for it destroys many things that would be deadly to men. But sometimes these snakes bite the ichneumon and he would die, but the story goes that there is a kind of grass growing near the river which heals snakebites—and as soon as ever the ichneumon gets bitten and feels the poison—he runs away to this little herb and nibbles at it, and gets healed

directly. Whether it is true or not, you and I have been bitten by the old serpent, Satan, and there is "the Plant of Renown," the Lord Jesus Christ—and if we go and feed upon Him, all the wounds that sins can make will soon be healed!

Well, these were very good lessons to be learned by David. Let me remind you what they were. God taught him to value his soul, to value the world aright, to see his sin and to see the remedy for it. Another thing David learned was to live as in God's sight. How wonderfully David talks, in various parts of the Psalms, about God seeing him! When I was a boy, about the size of many of these boys that I see before me here, my father made me learn that long Psalm, the 139th in which Dr. Watts puts thus the great Truth of God that God is everywhere and can see everyone—

"If mounted on a morning ray
I fly beyond the Western sea,
Your swifter hand would first arrive,
And there arrest your fugitive.
Or should I try to shun Your sight
Beneath the spreading veil of light,
One glance of time, one piercing ray,
Would kindle darkness into day.
The veil of night is no disguise,
No screen from Your all-searching eyes;
Your hand can seize Your foes as soon
Through midnight shades as blazing noon.
O may these thoughts possess my breast,
WhereverIrove, whereverIrest!

Nor let my weaker passions dare

Consent to sin, for God is there." One other lesson David learned was this, he learned to prepare to die. This is one of the grandest lessons that any man can ever learn for, you know, we must all die. There was a great king who was a great warrior as well as a king. His name was Saladin and when he was very ill in his tent, he said to his generals who gathered round him, "Go and fetch the crescent banner around which my warriors have always rallied in the day of battle." So they brought it in, on a long lance, and they unfurled the colors right before him. And the dying man said, "Take off the colors, and look, there is the shroud that I have had prepared to wrap me in when I am dead. Now, put the shroud on the lance instead of the colors." And they did so. These were the last words he uttered, "Go and take that shroud on the lance, and go through every street of the city and cry aloud, 'This is all that remains of the mighty Saladin! This is all that remains of the mighty Sa-ladin!'" And this is what will be said of all of us, "This is all that remains of that fair girl with the beautiful hair!" "This is all that remains of that dear boy who was once so full of mirth and laughter!" "This is all that remains of that gray-headed man, so wise and learned!" "This is all that remains of the merchant with all his wealth!" Or, "This is all that remains of the preacher with all his speech." Oh, to be ready, thoroughly ready, whenever the summons shall come for us to leave this world behind us and go to the better land!

III. Now the third head is about WHEN THE SCHOLAR WENT TO SCHOOL. I hope none of these boys who go to school ever go too late. "Dilly, dilly dollar," don't they say? "Ten o'clock scholar." He is always a bad scholar who comes in late. Those who go to God's school are never very good scholars if they go too late. When did David go to God's school, according to the text? THE CHILDREN: "In his youth!"

Mr. SPURGEON: That is right—in his youth. He says, "O God, You have taught me from my youth." He went to school in his early days and that is one of the reasons why he turned out so good a scholar, because he went to school early. Why should we go to God's school early? I think we ought to do so, first, because it is such a happy school. Schools used to be very miserable places, but nowadays, I really wish I could go to school again. I went into the Borough Road School the other day, into the Repository where they sell slates, pencils, books and all such things. The person who was there said to me, "Do you want to buy any of these things?" I said, "What are they?" He opened a box, and I said, "Why, they are toys, are they not?" He answered, "No, they are not. They are used for the lessons that are taught in the Kindergarten school." I said, "Why, if I were to take them home, my boys would have a game with them, for they are only toys!" "Just so," he said, "but they are what are used in the Kindergarten school to make learning the same as playing, so

that little children should play while they are learning." Why, I thought, if that were so, I would like to go at once! Now, those who go to God's school are made much more happy

than any toys can make children! He gives them real pleasure. There is a verse, I don't know how many of you know it. I will say the first line, you say the second, if you can.

Mr. SPURGEON: "'Tis religion that can give"

The CHILDREN: "Sweetest pleasures while we live!"

Mr. SPURGEON: "'Tis religion must supply

The CHILDREN: "Solid comfort when we die!"

Another reason why boys and girls should try to get to God's school very early is because they will not have so much to be sorry for afterwards. Two or three times during the last fortnight I have heard good men pray in the Tabernacle, and each one has said something like this, "O God, save my dear children! Grant that they may never go into sin as I did, that they may never have so much to repent of and to weep over as I had!" That was the father of some boy here, I expect. And oh, I know if he were here tonight, he would say, "Dear Boy, dear Girl, do not go into sins which will afterwards cause you to weep." This story will show you what I mean. A boy's father once said to him, "Now, John, I will tell you what I am going to do to make you look at yourself a little. Every time you do wrong, I am going to drive a nail into that post—and every time you do right, and are a good boy, I shall draw one out." "Well," John thought, "I will not have any nails in that post if I can help it." But they did get in somehow—boys will be boys and girls will be girls—and there were a lot of nails in the post! And the boy felt very sorry as he saw them, for they seemed to speak to him, and to say, "You disobeyed your father that day. You disobeyed your mother another day," and he thought he would be a good boy. So he tried with all his might and got half the nails out—and after a while, he got every nail out of the post. And what do you think he said, then? His father said to him, "You have got all the nails out, John." "Yes, Father," he said, "but there are the holes still there. There are the holes still there." Now when God's Grace comes to a man who has led a wicked life from his boyhood, it pardons him and takes the nails out. "Ah," he says, "but there are the holes still there! I remember the sins I did and they have done me serious hurt, though God has forgiven me." One good man said, "I never shall forgive myself, to think that I lived so long without serving God." Get then, dear Children, to God's school early, that you may not have the holes in the post, nor have so much to be sorry for in your later life!

Another reason why I would have boys and girls go to God's school early is because it will make them most useful A man cannot be very greatly useful who has only the end of his life to use for God. The tree that has been transplanted very lately cannot be expected to bear much fruit. But a tree that was put into the soil when but a cutting and that has continued to grow there, year after year, is more likely to become a good fruit-bearing tree.

One other reason why I would have you go to God's school soon is that you will die soon. Even if you live long, life will be very short. Oh, that God's mercy would take you into

God's school now, even tonight, that you may be able to say with David, "O God, You have taught me from my youth." Let this be your cry—

"Soon as my youthful lips can speak
Their feeble prayer to Thee,
O let my heart Your favor seek;
Good Lord, remember me!'

IV. Now the last thing and this is the most important of all tonight, and it will not take many minutes to tell you about it. The last thing is this. David said, "God, You have taught me from my youth." But David is now dead. I wonder whether there are some here tonight who can say the same as he did? I hope there are many. So the last head is, THE SCHOLAR—WHERE IS HE? THE SCHOLAR—WHERE IS SHE?

Pass those questions all round the building and I hope there are many who will be able to say, "O God, You have taught me"—Mary, Jane, Thomas, William—"You have taught me from my youth." I do not suppose you could make much of a speech tonight if you were on this platform, but do you know, if I could have my choice between being able to speak as well as Mr. Gladstone, who spoke so grandly last night, or only be able to say, "O God, You have taught me from my youth"—if I could only have one of the two—I would certainly choose the latter! There is more music in that sentence than in all the eloquence of the greatest orator!

I shall now ask a question or two, and then I shall have done. All the children here believe that when we have gone from this life, we shall go into another world. And you are all hoping, I am sure, that when you die, you will go to that happy land of which we sometimes sing—

"There is a happy land,
Far, far away,
Where saints in Glory stand,
Bright, bright as day!
Oh, how they sweetly sing,
Worthy is our Savior King,
Loud let His praises ring,
Praise, praise forever!
Come to this happy land,
Come, come away—
Why will you doubting stand?
Whystill delay?
Oh, we shall happy be
When from sin and sorrow free
Lord, we shall live with Thee,

Blest, blest forever!
Bright in that happy land
Beams every eye!
Kept by a Father's hand,
Love cannot die.
On then to Glory run,
Be a crown, and kingdom, won—
And bright above the sun,
Reign, reign forever."

May we have that crown and kingdom! That is what we are looking for. A little girl came home one Sunday and asked her mother a question. Little boys and girls will sometimes ask questions which cannot be very easily answered. She said, "Mother, do you believe what Teacher told me today?" "What's that, dear?" "Why, she said that we are only going to stay in this world for a little while, and that we are going to another world. Do you believe it, Mother?" "Oh, yes, my Dear, of course I do—the Bible says so!" "Then, Mother, you know aunt Eliza is going to Australia?" "Yes, what about that?" "She is getting ready, is she not?" "Yes, she is packing up her trunks and getting ready." "Then, Mother, if you are going into another world, why don't you get ready, too?" A very proper question for a child to put, and a very proper question for me to put to you here! If you are going to another world, dear Children, may God's Holy Spirit help you to get ready to go!

Dear Children, I hope you will be scholars who will learn that the next world is the one for us to look for This world is but a very poor thing at the best. A great man, a very rich man and a mighty emperor, invited a friend of his youth to come and stay with him. And this friend, when he entered into the palace, was quite dazzled by the marble, ivory, gold, silver and gems on every side, and he said to the great man, "How happy you must be with all this wealth! I never saw such a palace, nor such servants in livery, nor such gardens!" "Ah," said the other, "I will, one of these evenings, tell you what I think of all I have." So, one evening, a servant brought to this gentleman, on a golden dish, an apple so lovely that it seemed as if such an apple never grew! It was, as we sometimes say, like wax, perfect. He took it off the golden dish but put it back again, and the servant took a knife and cut it down the middle—and inside it was full of black dust and a great worm dropped out of it! The emperor said nothing, but looked at his friend, and his friend knew that he meant, "That is like my life—all outside looks very beautiful, but inside there is a worm." Now, in all the joy that this world ever gives to us there is a worm! The only apples that have no worms grow only in Paradise, and there, dear Children, if God shall teach us, we shall sit and pluck new fruit from the celestial tree. Let us go there and leave this poor world behind, seeking a better rest, where immortal fruits grow!

A gentleman bought a pear tree, and planted it in his garden. The first year it did not have any pears on it, but the second year there was a good show of bloom and after a while there was one little pear. So the gentleman said to his wife, "Now we shall know whether that really is as good a pear tree as the gardener told me it would be." To his children he said, "Now, mind none of you touch that pear, for I am very particular to know about it—to see whether it is worthwhile to keep the tree." One of his little boys was very fond of pears and he watched that pear and saw it grow. It kept on growing and his father said to him, "Now, John, I know you will not touch that pear. You may have any of the other

fruit in the garden, but you must not touch that pear." John said, "No, Father." Yet, somehow, as that pear began to swell and get ripe, John's mouth watered after that particular pear and he thought, "Oh, I should like to eat it!" He passed close by it, sometimes, but he did not touch it. At last, one night, a beautiful, bright, moonlight night, as he lay in bed, he looked out of the window and he could see the pear tree down in the garden, and he thought, "Father won't know I took the pear—he'll never think I would go out at night. I'll put on my slippers—it's a nice moonlight night— and I'll slip down and get that pear."

He went downstairs, though he hardly liked being out alone at night and, opening the back door, he went out into the garden and stood underneath the tree. He was getting on his tiptoes to reach the pear, when, between the leaves, a ray of light came right straight into his eyes. It was the gleam of a star and that star seemed to be watching him! And at the same moment that ray of light came through the leaves from that particular star, his heart seemed to say the four words which he said were the best words he ever heard, for they were, all his life long, a blessing to him—"You, God, see me." Down he went on to his feet, no more on his tiptoes, glided upstairs, took off his slippers and went to bed, so thankful to think that the star had looked at him and saved him from doing wrong! It seemed to be like God's light looking right through the trees and the text seemed to be God's Word reminding him how wrongly he was acting!

Now, he who goes to God's school, and has learned to live as in God's sight, has learned one of the best lessons that ever could be taught him. I hope that none of us here, whether men, or women, or boys, or girls, will ever be satisfied till, in everything, we act as in God's sight! Nobody would cheat in the shops, then! Nobody would tell a lie, then, if they knew that God was always looking upon them!

One other thing and I will finish. I think some dear boys and girls ought to be very earnest just now, and ask the Lord to take them into His school because there are many who are very anxious about them. There was once a boy of the name of Stoddart, and he was a very bad boy, or rather, he was a very bad young man. One night his pastor met him outside a little Chapel into which several people were going. The young man said, in a joking, saucy, naughty tone, "What are you doing?" And the minister, who was an old man, turned round and said, "Young man, this is what we are doing—your mother asked us to meet tonight

and pray for you." Young Stoddart walked away and said, "Then, if these people are praying about me, it's high time I should pray for myself!" And before the meeting was over, in he crept and you cannot tell the joy there was when he came in to say he thanked them for praying for him—and desired to pray for himself! He became a famous preacher in America and brought many souls to Christ—and was the man who preached a sermon at the chapel where afterwards Jonathan Edwards became a minister of Christ, and was the means of a great revival of religion!

Now we are praying for you! And John, and Mary, and William, and James, I want you to say, as this young man did, "Then it is high time we should pray for ourselves." God bless everyone of you, and bless you tonight, for Jesus Christ's sake!

And I must say just this one sentence or so. The way to go to God's school is this—Jesus Christ, God's dear Son, died on the Cross to open the door into that great school. And if any of you, my dear young Friends, will trust in Jesus Christ to save you, because He died for sinners, you are then inside His school and you shall be taught and trained. And as I told you about the little ichneumon that ate the grass and was healed, so shall you have all your sins forgiven and your soul-wounds healed—and you shall go on your way rejoicing!